

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6649

INFO PANCANAL

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, PN

SUBJECT: PARTIES CALL FOR NEW PLEBISCITE

REF: PANAMA 2375

1. THE PANAMENISTA, LIBERAL, CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC AND SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTIES AND THE INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT (MID) CALLED APRIL 19 FOR A NEW PLEBISCITE TO APPROVE THE CANAL TREATIES. THE MID IS A POLITICAL MOVEMENT WHICH GREW OUT OF THE INDEPENDENT LAWYERS MOVEMENT. THE FIVE ORGANIZATIONS ISSUED A "MANIFESTO TO THE NATION" AT A PRESS CONFERENCE IN THE HOLIDAY INN.

2. THE MANIFESTO STATES THAT THE RESERVATIONS, AMENDMENTS AND UNDERSTANDINGS "DISFIGURE OR MODIFY SUBSTANTIALLY THE ORIGINAL TEXT OF THE TREATIES WHICH WERE SUBMITTED TO A PLEBISCITE". THEIR ACCEPTANCE BY THE PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT REQUIRES A NEW PLEBISCITE, THE MANIFESTO STATES, NOTING TORRIJOS' PROMISE THAT POLITICAL EXILES MAY RETURN, THE MANIFESTO STATES THAT "THE EXILEES MUST FIND IN THE COUNTRY AN EXPRESS CLIMATE

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OF GUARANTEES FOR THE FULL EXERCISE OF THEIR RIGHTS". IT ALSO STATED THAT THE TORRIJOS ANNOUNCEMENT ON POLITICAL PARTIES WAS "A POSITIVE STEP".

3. DURING THE PRESS CONFERENCE THE MID, PANAMENISTA AND CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTIES REITERATED THEIR OPPOSITION TO THE TREATIES. THE POSITION OF THE LIBERAL

PARTY SEEMED TO BE SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT PARTY
REPRESENTATIVE JULIO HARRIS IS QUOTED IN THE PRESS
AS HAVING SAID "WE WANT THE GOVERNMENT TO TAKE THE TREATY
TO A NATIONAL CONSULTATION, AND THEN THE PARTY WILL
ANNOUNCE ITS POSITION".

4. THE POLITICAL SPOKESMEN REITERATED THEIR POSITION
IN FAVOR OF A RETURN TO A DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM WITH FREE
ELECTIONS WITH LEGISLATURE AND PRESIDENT.

5. COMMENT: IT IS NOT CLEAR YET WHETHER THE LEADERSHIP
AMENDMENTS TO THE CANAL TREATY WHICH WERE AIMED AT
TAKING SOME OF THE STING OUT OF DECONCINI HAS CAUSED THE
LIBERAL PARTY TO BACK AWAY SOMEWHAT FROM ITS
RECENTLY ANNOUNCED OPPOSITION TO THE TREATIES. (PANAMA 2375).
WE KNOW THAT, AS LATE AS A COUPLE OF HOURS BEFORE THE
CONFERENCE, THE LIBERALS HAD NOT PLANNED TO SIGN THE
MANIFESTO OR ATTEND THE PRESS CONFERENCE. ALSO
DAVID SAMUDIO, PARTY PRESIDENT, DID NOT ATTEND,
AND HE IS KNOWN TO BE "SOFTER" ON THE TREATIES
THAN SOME OTHER LIBERAL LEADERS. WE BELIEVE THE
PARTY IS AMBIVALENT ON ITS PRESENT POSITION, BUT WE
WILL BE REPORTING MORE LATER. JORDEN

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